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FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9169  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA PRIORITY 2282  
RHMISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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Sunday, 20 April 2008, 17:11  
S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000380

SIPDIS  
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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/E, AND INR/AA  
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD  
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA-WATCHER  
EO 12958 DECL: 04/20/2032  
TAGS PREL, MOPS, PBTS, DJ, ER, ET  
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI FM REPORTS TALKS UNDERWAY WITH ERITREA TO  
DEFUSE BORDER INCIDENT

REF: A. DJIBOUTI 378 B. DJIBOUTI 377

Classified By: ERIC WONG, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I.

11. (S) SUMMARY. On April 20, senior Djiboutian officials--including Djibouti's defense minister, intelligence chief, and deputy CHOD--were invited to a meeting with Eritrean officials. The meeting was held in Djibouti City. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. The parties agreed to work towards a peaceful resolution of the dispute.

12. (S) On April 20, Charge and GRPO met with Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf to discuss the GODJ's April 17 complaint that Eritrean forces had "pulled back" on the evening of April 19. FM Youssouf expressed concern that an estimated 3,000 Eritrean troops had crossed into Djiboutian territory.

FRENCH IMAGERY SHOWS STRUCTURE ON DISPUTED TERRITORY

13. (S) FM Youssouf presented low-resolution color photographs of Ras Doumeira dated the afternoon of April 17, which he said had been provided by Eritrean forces. The photographs show a structure on disputed territory.

14. (S) While Eritrean forces had "pulled back" on the evening of April 19, FM Youssouf expressed concern that an estimated 3,000 Eritrean troops had crossed into Djiboutian territory.

MIL-MIL TALKS UNDERWAY WITH ERITREA

15. (S) In response to this "belligerent act," Youssouf said the GODJ had strengthened its military presence at its base at Moulhoule (15 km south of Djibouti). To satisfy the GODJ's concerns, Eritrean forces needed to withdraw at least 1 km away from the demarcated border at Ras Doumeira.

16. (S) To satisfy the GODJ's concerns, Eritrean forces needed to withdraw at least 1 km away from the demarcated border at Ras Doumeira. Youssouf said; adding that international law required pulling back to 5 km from the border.

17. (S) FM Youssouf noted that the GODJ sought to utilize "quiet diplomacy" to defuse the situation, and had not yet issued any public statement.

ISAIAS "A LUNATIC"; SUSPICIOUS OF ETHIOPIA AND THE U.S.

18. (S) The Eritrean government (GSE) was "very unpredictable," Youssouf said. He underscored that Eritrean troops had previously attacked a Djiboutian town. Youssouf said President Isaías had complained, at the last EU-Africa summit in Lisbon, that there was "no terrorism in Djibouti." Isaías

ERITREA OPPOSED TO DJIBOUTIAN-BROKERED SOMALIA TALKS

19. (S) Recent business talks relating to the possible construction of a massive bridge linking Yemen to Djibouti had heightened GSE interest in Djibouti.

10. (S) COMMENT. FM Youssouf noted that no public statements from the USG were needed yet, as Djibouti sought to press Eritrea through "quiet

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